

Message Text

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DOE-11 SOE-02 ACDA-12 OMB-01 NRC-05 /102 W
-----124690 061159Z /15

R 061131Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6317
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
SECDEF WASH DC
DIA WASH DC
CNO WASH DC
CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USNMR SHAPE BE
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
COMIDEASTFOR
COMSIXTHFLT
JCS WASH DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 07166

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCLR US EG
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIP (NPW) TRANSIT OF THE
SUEZ CANAL

REF: (A) STATE 23171, (B) CAIRO 3717

SUMMARY: AS FIRST STEP IN PROCESS OF PERSUADING GOE AGREE
TO FREE PASSAGE OF NPWS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL, I HAD LENGTHY
DISCUSSION WITH GAMASY ON THE SUBJECT. MY PRESENTATION
BASED ON REF A AND RADM CHEWNING BRIEFING. GAMASY ASKED
NUMEROUS QUESTIONS RE SAFETY ASPECTS, BUT WAS GENERALLY
RECEPTIVE. HE UNDERTOOK SEND REPORT OF OUR TALK TO FONMIN
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KAMEL WITH REQUEST LATTER CONVENE MEETING OF INTERESTED GOE
MINISTRIES TO DISCUSS SUBJECT. MINDEFENSE REP WILL BE
INSTRUCTED SUPPORT FREE PASSAGE OF NPWS. GAVE HIM AIDE
MEMOIRE BASED ON PARA 5 REF A AND ALSO STANDARD STATEMENT
AND U.S. PUBLIC LAW 93-513. ALSO PLAN CALL NEXT FEW DAYS
ON FONMIN KAMEL, DEPUTY PRIMIN SULTAN AND MINED AND SCIEN-
TIFIC AFFAIRS HELMI, ALL OF WHOM ARE CONCERNED WITH

SUBJECT, IN ORDER DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INDICATED REF B, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO BEGIN EFFORT PERSUADE GOE TO ALLOW U.S. NPWS FREE TRANSIT OF SUEZ CANAL BY DISCUSSING MATTER WITH MINDEFENSE GENERAL GAMASY AND, HOPEFULLY, SOLICITING HIS SUPPORT. MUCH OF MY ALMOST TWO-HOUR TALK WITH HIM YESTERDAY WAS DEVOTED TO THAT SUBJECT.

2. I TOLD GAMASY THAT I KNEW MINDEFENSE WAS NOT THE ONLY GOE AGENCY CONCERNED WITH GENERAL SUBJECT, BUT THAT I WANTED TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM FIRST AND OBTAIN HIS COUNSEL ON HOW TO PROCEED. AS A MILITARY MAN, HE WOULD UNDERSTAND BETTER THAN SOME OF HIS CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE. I WAS CONFIDENT, TOO, THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO SUPPORT THEM WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES WITH A VIEW TO GOE ARRIVING AT AN EARLY DECISION TO PERMIT FREE TRANSIT OF NPWS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL.

3. I THEN WENT THROUGH THE POINTS CITED PARA 5 REF A, SUPPLEMENTING THEM WITH EXPLANATIONS DERIVED FROM MY FEBRUARY 10 MEETING WITH RADM CHEWNING AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON. IN PARTICULAR, I POINTED OUT THAT NPWS REGULARLY TRANSIT THE PANAMA CANAL. IN COURSE OF MY PRESENTATION, I GAVE GAMASY A COPY OF "STANDARD STATEMENT" AND OF PUBLIC LAW 93-513 AND EXPLAINED THEM TO HIM. (WE DO NOT HAVE COPY OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY
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REPORT ON THAT LAW.)

4. WHEN I HAD FINISHED, GAMASY SAID GOE RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT GUARANTEED BY THE PROVISION OF THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONVENTION OF 1888 TO FOREIGN STATES TO SEND THEIR WARSHIPS THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL. IN THE CASE OF THE BRITISH REQUEST TO ALLOW THE NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE "DREADNOUGHT" TO TRANSIT THE CANAL, THE ISSUE OF SAFETY HAD ARISEN. THERE WAS CONCERN ON THE PART OF SOME MINISTRIES AND SCA THAT IN THE NARROW CONFINES OF THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE CANAL CITIES, THERE WAS A DANGER OF EXPOSURE TO RADIOACTIVITY. THE BRITISH, WHILE CONTENDING THEIR NPWS WERE SAFE, HAD PROVIDED NO BACKUP EVIDENCE. HENCE, AN INTER-MINISTERIAL DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED TO DENY THE BRITISH REQUEST PENDING STUDY OF THE SAFETY ASPECTS OF THE NPW TRANSIT OF THE CANAL. HE UNDERSTOOD THIS WAS NOW UNDER WAY, BUT SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW FAR IT HAD PROGRESSED.

5. GAMASY SEEMED TO BE POSITIVELY IMPRESSED WITH THE SAFETY STATISTICS CITED IN OUR PRESENTATION AND READ THE "STANDARD STATEMENT" CAREFULLY. GAMASY ASKED NUMEROUS

QUESTIONS, WHICH FORTUNATELY I WAS ABLE TO ANSWER FROM INFO CONTAINED REF A AND THE CHEWNING BRIEFING. AT THE END OF OUR MEETING, GAMASY ASKED THAT I GIVE HIM IN AIDE MEMOIRE FORM THE TEXT OF WHAT I HAD SAID TO HIM. (I HAVE TODAY SENT HIM AIDE MEMOIRE MAKING POINTS CITED PARA 5, REF A.)

6. PROCEDURALLY SPEAKING, GAMASY INDICATED THAT IT IS THE MFA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO COORDINATE THE GOE POSITION. MINDEFENSE, MINEDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS (HELMI) AND MINPOWER (DEP PRIMIN SULTAN) ARE ALL INVOLVED. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT ATOMIC ENERGY AFFAIRS, WHICH HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO HELMI AFTER MINSTATE GUBAILY LEFT THE CABINET LAST YEAR, WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO MINPOWER
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SULTAN. HE SUGGESTED, THEREFORE, THAT I MAKE SAME PRESENTATION TO FONMIN KAMEL, DEPUTY PRIMIN SULTAN AND MINSCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS HELMI. ASKED IF MATTER SHOULD ALSO BE DISCUSSED WITH SCA CHAIRMAN MASHOUR, GAMASY INSISTED SCA CHAIRMAN HAS NO VOICE IN GOE POLICY DECISION.

6. GAMASY UNDERTOOK SEND REPORT OF OUR TALK TO FONMIN KAMEL WITH REQUEST LATTER CONVENE A MEETING OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERESTED GOE MINISTRIES WITH A VIEW TO ARRIVING AT A DECISION ON THIS MATTER. MINDEFENSE REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE INSTRUCTED, ON THE BASIS OF WHAT I HAD TOLD HIM, TO URGE THAT FREE PASSAGE OF NPWS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL BE ALLOWED SUBJECT APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS AND SECRET

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ASSURANCES SUCH AS "STANDARD STATEMENT". DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN TERMS OF ALL NATIONS HAVING NPWS. I THANKED GAMASY FOR HIS UNDERSTANDING AND HIS PROFERRED ASSISTANCE AND SAID I WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES WHO ARE INVOLVED BEFORE ANY SUCH MEETING TAKES PLACE.

7. I INTEND CALL ON KAMEL, SULTAN AND HELMI NEXT FEW DAYS TO DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH THEM. EILTS

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